GVCs and consumer-led campaigns: lobbying between the state and the market

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Abstract

The Global Value Chains (GVC) framework has emerged as a way to conceptualise the globalisation of production systems and the changes that have occurred in the economy. GVCs have not only a significant economic impact, but also political implications as they shift the balance of power in global politics; this increased power of firms and the market changes the strategies that groups use when taking political action. While the impact of GVCs on groups has been examined from the perspective of governance and of groups' preferences in lobbying for trade, their impact on broader political action has not been examined. *How has the emergence of GVCs changed the way in which consumer-led groups lobby for regulation*? This paper will provide a preliminary answer to this question through a case study of consumer activism against GMOs and glyphosate in the EU. It provides a novel framework of political action by groups, incorporating market-oriented action into lobbying frameworks. Ultimately, the geographic and vertical fragmentation of production and the important role of lead firms have created new opportunities and targets for political action. Original empirical material is presented from interviews and document analysis.

Introduction

Global value chains (GVCs) are an increasingly common way of conceptualising worldwide production and distribution systems. The globalisation of trade has led to the formation of transnational chains, while the fragmentation of production moves production processes geographically further from the end consumer and renders them less transparent. GVCs have not only a significant economic impact, but also political implications as they shift the balance of power in global politics. The increased power of firms and the market changes the strategies that groups use when taking political action; meanwhile, states' role in regulation is less important, leading to the emergence of the idea of 'governance. However, this is often de-politicised and taken out of the context

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of groups' broader political action. Political actions which *use* the effects of GVCs but are not forms of private governance *per se* are thus often overlooked when examining the effects of GVCs.

However, overlooking the range of strategies that groups can use risks hiding the broader implications of GVCs. In contrast to the existing literature, this paper examines their impact from NGOs' point of view, exploring how the rise of GVCs has changed the context in which groups lobby and therefore the strategic decisions that they make. It examines groups' actions 'at the intersection of NGO politics and private regulation' (Sasser et al. 2006) to provide a wider view of political action more generally. While scholars have examined how GVCs change the preferences of firms lobbying on trade (Eckhardt 2011; Eckhardt & Poletti 2016), their potential impact on other groups' lobbying more broadly has not been explored, particularly in terms of consumer-led groups or NGOs.

This paper therefore aims to answer the question: *how has the emergence of GVCs changed the strategies that consumer-led groups use to lobby for regulation?* It examines GVCs as a contextual factor which has had an impact on the way that groups take decisions on their lobbying strategies by changing the environment in which they act. Such research can provide us with a perspective on how contemporary changes in the economy and politics affect the ways that groups take political action. There is an increasing awareness that contextual factors including issue-level and institutional factors, while often ignored when studying lobbying strategies, are important in groups' decisions on where and how to lobby (Binderkrantz & Rasmussen 2015; De Bruycker 2016; Klüver et al. 2015). By linking the two strands of literature – GVCs (which show the interrelatedness of the political and market spheres) and lobbying – we aim to show the implications of these new economic structures on the way that interest groups function.

The notion of 'governance' has broadened to include attempts to regulate the value chain by non-business groups, particularly on the basis of environmental or social values (Baron 2016; Davis et al. 2016). Despite this, consumers are often assumed to be passive actors within GVCs. Indeed, consumers seem the least-likely case to govern GVCs for two reasons: first, GVCs move production away from consumers, making them theoretically more removed and less able to take action both because of geographic distance and lack of transparency within the chains. Second, consumers are generally expected to benefit from the reduction in prices from increasingly efficient outsourced production. There are, however, a rising number of consumer-led attempts at GVC governance through labelling programmes such as Fair Trade and campaigns against firms' production practices, including transnational campaigns against for example sweatshops or child labour (Bartley & Child 2014). However, the way that GVCs may change how groups take action even at the national level has not been explored.

This paper studies this by examining the reauthorisation of the herbicide glyphosate in the EU and the strategies taken by one Belgian group – Greenpeace – in their campaign against it. The reauthorisation,

originally expected to be a simple matter, quickly gained large-scale public attention and the vote was postponed several times due to public pressure, before the chemical's licence was extended by 18 months (in contrast to the 15 years originally planned) in June 2016. It demonstrates a rather exceptional range of strategies, targeting both the EU, national governments and companies, and can therefore provide examples of how groups choose to take action and the strategies that they use to govern glyphosate in the EU and in their countries.

I find that increased vertical fragmentation and the important role of retailers created opportunities for Greenpeace to take action within the market sphere. Firms are made more vulnerable, providing a potentially more accessible and effective target for a consumer-led movement than traditional political action against governments. Moreover, there is evidence that market-based strategies were adopted once it became clear that the government was hostile to the group's cause, pointing towards a sort of venue-shopping in the market sphere.

I take an deductive approach, first highlighting the main impacts of GVCs on the context in which groups lobby before theoretically tracing how these structural changes may affect the context in which consumer-led groups choose their lobbying and campaign strategies. It will then explore the case study for this paper, before concluding with a discussion of the factors found to influence group lobbying strategies.

GVCs and the state-market divide

Before addressing the question of the implications of GVCs on the ways in which consumers can take action, the concept of GVCs should be split into the two factors which are most influential in changing the context in which (consumer-led) groups lobby.

GVCs have fundamentally changed the functioning of the economy, creating 'globally dispersed and organisationally fragmented production and distribution networks' (Gereffi et al. 2005). First, production is *geographically* fragmented (globalised), with chains of buyers and suppliers spread across the globe. Second, production is *vertically* fragmented (between firms), leading to an increase in the number of actors involved in production and the complexity of chains. However, firms within the chains can also become more vulnerable due both to the importance of brand name, and the interdependence of firms along the chain (Schurman & Munro 2009).

In the big picture, this 'increasingly fragmented and footloose global economy' has therefore led to a rise in the importance of the market relative to governments, as the lack of geographical boundaries means that companies are no longer tied to one state, and have influence beyond national borders (Mayer & Gereffi 2010). This change in balance between economic and political spheres changes the environment in which interest groups take their political action. NGOs and consumer-led groups can

choose to hold their campaigns either through the state[2] – by lobbying the government – or through the market, by campaigning against firms. While market-based action has been documented, often in terms of private governance or the use of boycotts, its lack of integration into existing frameworks mean that it has not been systematically analysed as a type of lobbying or a choice that groups make; nor has the influence of other factors such as context been examined. Moreover, market-based strategies have been explained in the transnational sphere – as a form of private governance – but not on a national level.

Before a discussion of contextual factors, it is important to consider which sphere is the 'default' sphere that groups will target when aiming to regulate business activities. The answer to this question depends largely on which literature is examined. The interest group literature tends to assume that groups will target the government and does not tend to count market-based strategies as lobbying (with the occasional exception of boycotts, e.g. (Kriesi et al. 2007)). On the other hand, literature more specifically on GVCs or private governance focuses much more heavily on the market as the 'natural' arena for regulation, particularly because of its economic angle. From one angle, this seems logical – targeting companies directly may lead to a quicker change in behaviour, as companies self-regulate after NGO pressure. However, many scholars agree that the state holds the ultimate authority and is often needed to monitor or control corporate behaviour effectively (Abbot & Snidal 2009; Verbruggen 2013); moreover, 'hard' law backed up by government regulation and 'soft' law from private regulation reinforce each other and interact (Bartley 2014; Héritier & Eckert 2008). Even based on the private regulatory literature, then, we may expect groups to use state-based strategies when possible, as government regulation is the ultimate authority and the easiest way to regulate a whole industry.

Why, then, would market strategies be used when government regulation would be possible? The literature on boycotts provides one potential explanation. Friedman (1999) coined the term 'surrogate boycotts' to describe boycotts that are used not simply to directly target the company being boycotted, but use the boycott to push for change on a political level by 'attempt[ing] to change political issues into economic ones'. These surrogate boycotts have been examined in movements such as the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel or the anti-apartheid boycotts in South Africa (Gabriel & Lang 2006), in cases where governments were not willing or able to take action. As 'surrogate' campaigns, then, market-based strategies may be a potential alternative to lobbying for government regulation when the government is unwilling to regulate. Private regulatory schemes have indeed been referred to as a 'second-best option' when government regulation is impossible (Vogel 2009), but it is unclear whether this could also apply to other market-based campaigns.

[2] In this paper 'state-based strategy' is used to refer to any lobbying or campaign that targets policymakers, including at regional or EU level. This choice has been taken to avoid the use of 'political', which would imply that market-based strategies are not also politically motivated.

The following section will outline how issue-level and institutional factors may affect the types of strategies groups use, drawing out the ways in which GVCs lead to these changes.

Issue-level factors

Process vs. product

One of the most well-documented aspect of GVCs is their consequence on the role of the state in regulating corporate behaviour and production. This occurs particularly because of the globalisation of production, and the resulting geographic spread of firms and 'parts' of the chain that should be regulated. The transnational constellations of market actors lead to new roles for the state and less importance for traditional regulatory structures, as individual states find themselves unable to govern the increasingly complex chains (Neilson et al. 2014). Generally, therefore, GVCs seem to make state-based strategies less appealing and effective, because they reduce the role that the state can play in regulation.

However, this should be qualified, as there is a difference between regulation of the *production process* and of the *end product*. Production process may be difficult to impossible to regulate through one state as it occurs globally. Of course, there are nonetheless attempts to regulate production processes, particularly in developed countries where there are existing government structures, although the efficacy of these attempts is unclear (Gereffi & Lee 2016). The end product, on the other hand, can be easily regulated by the importing state. Food safety is one area in which public regulation and legislation are used to regulate on a national basis (or at EU level), and where private and public regulation interlink (Lee et al. 2012). In short, public (state-based) regulation can be used to control end product, while (transnational) private regulation may be necessary to regulate production processes.

Salience and complexity

Two important issue-level factors are the saliency and the complexity of the issue, which affect the types of strategies that groups use. The interest group literature makes a basic distinction between two main types of strategies that groups can use: inside strategies, which directly target policymakers (meetings, position papers, etc.), and outside strategies, which mobilise a group's members or the public (petitions, protests, etc.) (Beyers 2004). Outside strategies are may also be targeted at the media with the explicit aim of gaining publicity for the group and potentially influencing public opinion (Berkhout 2010; Binderkrantz & Krøyer 2012). While the lack of literature examining market-based campaigns as a form of lobbying means that they have not previously been classified as 'inside' and

'outside' strategies, they also range from directly targeting companies to mobilising the public (as has been touched upon by some social movement scholars, e.g. (den Hond & de Bakker 2007)). Inside strategies include meetings with companies, eco-labelling schemes or certification (i.e. direct cooperation or discussion with companies), ranging to outside strategies such as emails, petitions, boycotts and even brandalism (brand vandalism, altering ads or creating parodies).

The choice between inside or outside strategies has been extensively examined in the lobbying literature (see e.g. (Dür & Mateo 2013; Kollman 1998; Page 1999; Dür & Mateo 2016)) and the main factors which appear to have an effect on strategy choice are group type and issue-level factors. For the purposes of this paper, which examines only NGOs, group type is not relevant: issue factors include the complexity and salience of an issue. The less complex and more salient an issue is, the more easily a group can use an outside strategy to mobilise public opinion and enlist the help of groups (Binderkrantz & Rasmussen 2015; Junk 2016; Klüver et al. 2015). As market strategies have not been classified as lobbying, it is unclear whether similar considerations affect groups' choices in the market in the same way. While this issue-level factor is not necessarily influenced by GVCs, including it as a contextual factor can provide us with insights into the patterns of state- and market-based lobbying and how groups may combine inside and outside strategies.*

Structural factors

Lead firms and retailers

As outlined above, the vertical fragmentation of production within GVCs influences the context within which NGOs or other groups make their decision on where to lobby (i.e. between the state or the market). The new structure of the market creates new vulnerabilities along chains and opportunities for groups to lobby, but the fragmentation may also make it more difficult to decide where to take action. However, the presence of lead firms may create an ideal target for groups to lobby within the market.

Vertical fragmentation of production has the greatest implications for the viability of the market as a potential route for political action by groups. Certainly in existing literature on governance of GVCs the fragmentation of chains is key to the success of firm-led voluntary governance schemes (Brammer et al. 2012), although chains' increasing complexity also means that firms are often unable to control their entire value chain, limiting the effect of such schemes (Baron 2016; Lund-Thomsen & Lindgreen 2013). The multitude of actors may make it more difficult for groups to choose which actors to target when using market strategies.

However, at the same time, fragmentation and new market structures make certain firms more vulnerable because of the emergence of lead firms and their newfound importance. Although power is more dynamic in the GVCs framework, lead firms retain power over their suppliers and are often able to influence their behaviour (Gereffi et al. 2005). Lead firms' brands are also highly important, as these firms outsource their production and concentrate their own resources on the crafting and management of their brand. Because of their value chain power and the importance of their brand name and reputation, these firms have been the ones to initiate many voluntary firm-led initiatives, and more recently the target of NGO campaigns *encouraging* CSR due to their power to change conditions along their supply chains, leveraging the lead firms' position to achieve social and environmental objectives (Gereffi 2014; Mayer & Gereffi 2010). Anti-sweatshop campaigns through groups like the Clean Clothes Campaign in particular have been able to target the important brand names of large apparel brands such as Nike and stores such as H&M in their campaigns (Bartley & Child 2011). Lead firms thus create new market or industry opportunity structures (cf. 'political opportunity structures') for activists to campaign against market actors (Schurman 2004; Wahlström & Peterson 2006). They present the added advantage that they often represent the 'big names' in a sector and as such can be targeted to lead to large-scale change (Gereffi et al. 2001; Wapner 1995).

Nonetheless, these large multinational lead firms may also be difficult to target if they cannot be easily reached by consumers. Research on boycotts has indicated that companies are more likely to be targeted by boycotts when they sell consumer boycotts, have a brand that can be easily targeted, and sell substitutable products (Friedman 1999). Retailers in particular – often nationally-based – are both easily recognised and reached by consumers in a way that large suppliers are not, making them easier to boycott or to be the target of a campaign (Baron 2003). Targeting these companies follows a different logic to that of the large lead firm: while smaller retailers may not always be able to control the value chain, brand name is still important, particularly in highly concentrated sectors, and main retailers in sectors such as food and everyday products (i.e. supermarkets) are usually household names better known than the producers of the products themselves (Lee et al. 2012). Finally, the retailer is the access point of the consumer, so boycotts of a particular retailer may have run-on effects to suppliers (or at least send a signal). Both large, multinational lead firms *and* retailers are therefore likely to be targets of market based campaigns, although these campaigns may differ in the strategies that they can use.[3]

Competition among firms

[3] In order to properly investigate this, a complementary case study is being considered (e.g. campaigns against palm oil) where the companies being targeted are multinational lead firms rather than retailers. Alternately, another section about Monsanto will be added comparing the strategies that groups use to target Brico and Monsanto itself.

Building upon the insights into the importance of brand name for companies, the effect of density of firms and competition between firms also becomes clear: increased competition means that companies' brands are more important, so firms are more likely to be sensitive to any brand-based activism (Lee et al. 2012; Mayer & Gereffi 2010). High competition may also increase the likelihood of a 'domino effect', whereby changes made in one firm (particularly the market leader) may be echoed by other firms in the sector for fear of either losing a competitive advantage vis-à-vis consumers or becoming the next target of a campaign (Friedman 1999; Rosendal 2005). GVCs have created more intense global competition (Gereffi 2011), although this will have a stronger effect on global lead firms than retailers. Particularly, as outlined above, GVCs increase the importance of branding in mitigating competition.

The table below summarises the contextual factors found in the literature. Generally, we would expect the emergence of GVCs to lead to more market-based lobbying, as they shift the balance of power from the state to the market. This ultimately means that lobbying or campaigning for regulation through the market sphere becomes more effective, and new vulnerabilities within value chains are created which groups can easily target.

Table 1 Contextual factors increasing likelihood of state- and market-based strategies

	State-based strategies	Market-based strategies
Issue-level factors	Regulation of end product	Regulation of production process
	Salience (+outside strategies)	Salience (+outside strategies)
	Complexity (+outside strategies)	Complexity (+outside strategies)
Institutional/structural factors	Lower competition or no main lead firm/retailer	Presence of a lead firm or retailer
		Competition between firms

Case study

This section will outline and analyse the case study chosen for this paper: Greenpeace Belgium's campaign against the reauthorisation of glyphosate. This case has been chosen as the campaign uses a variety of state- and market-based strategies, and therefore gives us the chance to draw out reasons for the choice of different strategies. While the case is ongoing, this does not present a problem for this research as we do not examine the impact or success of the campaign overall, but rather why different strategies are chosen.

While Greenpeace Belgium can be seen as an exceptional case as it by no means represents the average NGO in Belgium or indeed the EU, as a first case study it can allow for refinement of expectations, which can be further tested in a comparative case study or qualitative comparative analysis. Data has

been gathered through primary sources, including policy documents, position papers, online sources email exchanges and personal interviews conducted by the author with NGO representatives (with interviews with policymakers and retailers planned). Secondary sources in the form of newspaper articles were used in preliminary stages to get a broader picture of the timeframe of the campaign, and data was organised with NVivo to draw out themes and frames.

I will first provide an overview of the action taken at an EU level, as this provides the basis/background knowledge for action in Belgium, before examining Greenpeace's campaign in Belgium.

Rockier than expected: glyphosate reauthorisation in the EU

Glyphosate is the active ingredient in Roundup, the most used herbicide in the world for both agricultural and private use. In July 2015, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the cancer research agency of the World Health Organisation (WHO), declared it to be a 'probable human carcinogen'. In August 2015 the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) released its hazard assessment for glyphosate, declaring it 'unlikely to pose a carcinogenic risk to humans'. Civil society groups began lobbying in preparation for the European Food and Safety's (EFSA) risk assessment, on which the EU's reauthorisation of glyphosate would be dependent. In October, a coalition of 47 EU and national health and environmental NGOs sent a letter to Commissioner Andriukaitis asking him to call for extra assessment by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and urging the EU not to reauthorise glyphosate.

However, public attention remained relatively limited until November 2015, when EFSA released the results of its own risk assessment of glyphosate: that it was 'probably not carcinogenic to human beings'. Immediately, civil society groups began campaigns against EFSA's assessment and against the reauthorisation of glyphosate. Their main claim was that EFSA was biased, non-transparent and was using industry-sponsored studies; this was compounded by the fact that EFSA refused to release its methodology and the studies on which its assessment was based until the end of 2016, after heavy NGO pressure.

The period between November 2015 and June 2016 was marked by mass mobilisation and very public campaigns. A group of 96 international independent scientists wrote to the Commission on 30 November 2015 asking it to ignore EFSA's study because of shortcomings in clarity and transparency.[i] In January 2016 65 MEPs from different political parties wrote to Commissioner Andriukaitis arguing against EFSA's lack of transparency and expressing concern about reauthorisation;[ii] in total, 64 NGOs signed three letters to the Commission over this period.[iii] The mobilisation seems equally to have led to bandwagoning, where groups with only minor interest in the policy, such as EurEAU (water) or Euromalt (malting industry), wrote position papers to clarify their position within – or distance

themselves from – the debate. This fits with mobilisation patterns found in other highly public campaigns in the EU (Dür & Mateo 2014; Parks 2015).

In addition to organised lobbying from established groups, multiple petitions were submitted to the European Parliament and the European Commission. In March 2016 one petition reached 180 000 signatures and was handed to the Commission,[iv] and in May one from Avaaz (a grassroots website) which reached over 1.4 million signatures which was delivered to the Parliament.[v] Other non-conventional, highly public forms of action – such as the Greens/EFA MEPs organising tests for the presence of glyphosate in MEPs' urine – also took place in the lead-up to the EU's reauthorisation.

In March the European Commission proposed extending glyphosate for 15 years, but several member states voted to postpone the decision. The European Parliament's resolution of 13 April 2016 called upon the European Commission to renew glyphosate for 7 years, banning it for non-commercial use. Finally, after member states failed to reach a decision, the issue went into comitology and the Standing Committee on Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (PAFF) granted a temporary extension to glyphosate's licence, until the end of 2017. The decision was taken on 29 June, one day before the license was due to expire. ECHA is currently reviewing the classification of glyphosate and produced their official opinion in March 2017, maintaining its current classification and thus not classifying it as carcinogenic.

As the reauthorisation is only temporary, lobbying has continued. Given ECHA's new role, NGOs have particularly focused on what they perceive to be non-transparency and industry biases in the ECHA team reviewing the chemical. Moreover, a European Citizen's Initiative has been submitted to the European Commission and was officially launched in February 2017. This initiative is a petition which the Commission is legally obliged to respond to if it can reach 1 million signatures within a year, and meet national quotas in seven countries. The ECI launch was accompanied by EU-wide protests at Schuman in Brussels, outside the Coliseum in Rome and in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. Germany reached its quota of signatures within 24 hours of the launch of the petition, and 500 000 signatures were reached after five weeks.[vi]

From this overview of the state of glyphosate reauthorisation at EU level, it is clear that this issue is both highly salient and lowly complex. While the science involved in the classification of different chemicals is a very specialised, complex area, the actual reauthorisation is relatively simple and can be presented as a 'yes/no' situation rather than a highly nuanced or technical policy. The very low complexity of the policy – and the potential for it to be further simplified by groups – may have contributed to the high levels of mobilisation, which surprised even the NGOs working on the topic (interview, 7/3/2017).

Greenpeace Belgium's campaign: Phase 1, targeting retailers

As the European Commission has made clear, whether or not the chemical glyphosate is authorised in the EU does not prevent member states from banning herbicides or pesticides containing the chemical in their own regions or countries. This means that in addition to the European-level campaigning, national-level mobilisation occurred in Belgium with two goals: to obtain a national ban of herbicides with glyphosate as the active ingredient, and to get the federal Minister for Agriculture to vote against the European reauthorisation. In Belgium, the regions cannot ban the sale of herbicides but can ban their usage: glyphosate-containing herbicides have been banned for public use at a local and regional level in Flanders since 2015 and total bans take effect in Brussels and Wallonia in 2018 and 2019. Nonetheless, Minister for Agriculture Willy Borsus was in favour of glyphosate reauthorisation in the EU, indicating a split between the federal and regional politicians.

Greenpeace Belgium has been highly active in the Belgian campaign against glyphosate, which began in 2015 after the publication of IARC's report. In May 2015 a coalition of 10 health and environmental NGOs, including Greenpeace, wrote a letter to the Ministers for Health and Agriculture, Maggie de Block and Willy Borsus, calling for the ban of glyphosate in Belgium.[vii] Greenpeace also launched a petition aimed at Minister Borsus on its website. At the same time, the organisations wrote to the main DIY stores in Belgium – Brico, Gamma, Hubo and Aveve – asking them to stop selling glyphosate to individuals and to propose alternatives in their place. The reply from the politicians was that the federal government was following the affair and waiting for EFSA's risk assessment; retailers, however, did not respond to the letter.

Aside from its work within the coalition, Greenpeace also encouraged their members to take action against retailers. In the first of these retailer-targeted actions in May 2015, members were encouraged to ask workers in garden stores whether they were aware of the products' risks, to ask where they could find non-toxic alternatives to glyphosate in the store, and to share the responses with Greenpeace. In October of the same year, 1000 Greenpeace members participated in a sticker action, sticking skull and crossbones stickers on bottles of herbicides in the four targeted garden stores.

Between October and May Brico continued its campaign against retailers as well as but attention was mostly turned to the EU level and the reauthorisation which was meant to happen there. In March the coalition of Belgian NGOs sent a joint letter to the Ministers for Agriculture, the Environment and Health asking them to vote against the EU reauthorisation. Additionally, Greenpeace is represented as a civil society organisation within AFSCA, the Belgian Federal Agency for the Safety of the Food Chain, and continued to try to get its voice heard there during debates.

Greenpeace Belgium's campaign: Phase 2, Brico brandalism

In May 2016 Greenpeace launched its first action specifically against Brico. In line with previous action, the first strategy was a stickering action: almost 2000 Greenpeace followers posted stickers on bottles of Roundup saying, 'Pesticides: pas dans mon magasin' and 'No to pesticides, Yes to nature'. Brico did not respond to any of the letters sent to it by Greenpeace; two weeks later, Greenpeace returned to Brico and removed Roundup and other pesticides from shelves, placing them in shopping trolleys, covering them with wire netting and padlocking them to 'keep them in a safe place'.

At this stage of the campaign, Greenpeace also suggested three ways for their members to take part in the campaign against Brico. First, they could email the CEO of Brico directly – Greenpeace provided a copy-and-paste letter and email address. Second, members could telephone Brico's main office and ask for the CEO, asking him to remove glyphosate-based herbicides from Brico's shelves: the website listed telephone numbers and provided a list of arguments against glyphosate that members could use when they called. Members were also encouraged to give their local Brico store a bad rating on Google Maps and to comment on Brico's Facebook page with a photo of them using an environmentally-friendly herbicide or weed removal method and the comment, 'My home is without pesticides. And yours, Brico? Pesticides: not in my garden or my store!'.[viii] At the same time, in June 2016, Greenpeace also had a form on their website allowing members to send an email to Willy Borsus (Minister for Agriculture) individually.

Post-reauthorisation in the EU, Greenpeace held a protest outside of Brico's headquarters.[ix] They also met with the executive of Brico but this was regarded as unsuccessful: Brico took the stance that as long as glyphosate was legal, they would stock it. Because of the lack of reaction from the retailer, Greenpeace launched the current campaign against Brico: 'Brico – pour les cancers' (a pun on the slogan of Brico, 'pour les makers'). The main image of this campaign is a typical example of brandalism or ad-busting: it shows a picture of a baby with a bottle of Roundup held gun-style to its head, with the "O" in Brico's logo replaced by a skull and crossbones.[x] This campaign included another stickering campaign within Brico stores, and Greenpeace activists also hung up posters in the hometown of the CEO of the company addressing him directly ('Hey, Dieter!'). Greenpeace has also continued to encourage members to write on Facebook and Twitter to Brico or to send them an e-card through their site, and activists gatecrashed a cycling competition in January 2017 and unfurled banners, with the aim of appearing on television. As of March, Brico's only response had been to express its 'disappointment' at the confrontational tactics of Greenpeace, and to reiterate that they would wait for legislation at a European level before acting. The campaign is ongoing.

Greenpeace and the state/market choice

Because this paper currently only examines a single case study, there are clear limitations to the conclusions that we can draw about the factors outlined above. As discussed above, the issue regulates product rather than process, has low complexity and high salience. We would therefore expect high levels of mobilisation (which did occur at both EU and Belgian levels), outside strategies and state regulation. Nonetheless, in Belgium we can see a high level of market-based lobbying from Greenpeace, which we will examine in more detail.

Interestingly, examining Greenpeace's strategies (Table 2) we can see a clear evolution of the market-based strategies that they use over time. While strategies start out broader – aimed at several different retailers – and reasonably non-confrontational (more 'inside'), they become both more specific (targeted only at Brico) and media-oriented, with tactics such as 'hijacking' a cycling cross to unfurl banners in front of TV cameras. This is interesting as it has often been assumed that all market-based strategies are at a similar level, with strategies shifting from firm-level to industry-level changes (den Hond et al. 2010); however, the evolution here shows that there may be a pattern to how groups move between different types of lobbying even towards one firm. The move towards very specific and almost petty strategies also raises the question of to what extent such strategies really aim to damage brands and to what extent they are a publicity stunt with the aim of gaining publicity and appeasing members.

Table 2 State-and market-based strategies used by Greenpeace Belgium

Market-based strategies	State-based strategies
Letters to main Belgian garden stores (May 2015)	Letters to Ministers for Agriculture and Health (May 2015)
Petition to main Belgian garden stores (September 2015)	Petition towards Minister for Agriculture (May 2015)
Stickering action against retailers (Oct. 2015, May 2016)	Email campaign to Minister for Agriculture (June 2016)
Empty shelves action (June 2016)	Representation in AFSCA (Belgian Agency for Food Safety) (ongoing)
Email/telephone action (June 2016)	
Social media action (June 2016)	
Meeting with executives of Brico (mid 2016)	
Protest outside Brico HQ (5 October 2016)	
'Brandalist' posters and campaign (December 2016)	

Brico as the market leader

The evidence gathered in this case study indicates that Brico's position as the market leader in DIY stores was an important factor in the choice to lead a campaign against them. Greenpeace's press

releases, letters and articles justify the choice of Brico with its position as market leader, with the glyphosate issue an 'opportunity' for Brico to become the 'front runner' of Belgium and to live up to the sustainability and social responsibility pledges in its company policy. This is, moreover, a strategy that Greenpeace Belgium has previously used: in 2015 the group led a campaign against unsustainable palm oil in Delhaize (the leading Belgian supermarket chain), seen to be highly successful because they could cause brand damage to a household name (interview, 7/3/2017). This indicates the importance of at least a minimum of competition between firms for market-based campaigns to work, as has been explored in previous research on consumer campaigns against GMOs in supermarkets (Kurzer & Cooper 2007; Schurman 2004; Schurman & Munro 2009). However, the lack of response from Brico indicates that the DIY store sector may work differently to supermarkets, or competition may be insufficient for Brico to care about the campaign – although an additional case study may be necessary to check this.

Two other observations in this case point towards the influence of lead retailers on the choice of strategy. First, retailers have been targeted in other European countries during the glyphosate campaign. For example, UK supermarket Waitrose was targeted by petitions, and Brico's Dutch sister store Praxis removed products containing glyphosate in 2015 after pressure from Greenpeace Netherlands, with other Dutch stores quickly following suit in a domino effect (PAN International 2016). Moreover, there have been no market strategies used at a European level, pointing again to the importance of brand name for a market strategy to be viable. Compared to other sectors like apparel, brands of supermarkets are more nationally-based, so campaigns such as this would be less possible at the European level.

While transnational and European campaigns have targeted Monsanto itself through the Monsanto Tribunal in the Hague (October 2016) and an ongoing court case brought to a German court by a transnational group of civil society representatives, these actions are less consumer-based and less accessible to 'normal' citizens. Greenpeace Belgium also refers throughout its campaign to Roundup, Monsanto and GMOs, linking the issue of glyphosate to previous heated debates on GM crops (as also found in Parks 2015). This also highlights their use of the retailer, Brico – the accessible point of contact with the consumer – to target what they perceive as a larger problem. It would be interesting to examine how campaigns against Monsanto have differed from campaigns against retailers, potentially through a second case study.

Market-based strategies as a fall-back option

This is an example of regulation of *product* rather than *process*, so we may expect groups to lobby the state – particularly when the debate over reauthorisation was ongoing at an EU level, as it seems clear that this would be the most efficient way to achieve the removal of glyphosate from all stores (rather

than from one store in one country). Yet, while some state-based strategies were used, they remained limited to some public letters and an online petition.

At the beginning of the campaign there is no temporal difference in strategies: the coalition of NGOs sent letters to Belgian ministers and DIY stores on the same day in May 2015. Nonetheless, later in the campaign Greenpeace phrases the targeting of garden stores as a second-best option to state regulation: 'seeing as politicians under pressure from industry are find it difficult to shoulder their responsibility, retailers must take on their own'.[xi] The number and timeline of strategies also indicate that the choice to target retailers was taken at least in part because the political route was locked; while strategies remained relatively even prior to the failure of the vote in the EU, intense market strategies began in June 2016, at the same time that it became clear that Belgian ministers were voting for the reauthorisation.[xii] Greenpeace confirmed this, highlighting the importance of the market-based work in this campaign: 'we felt quite quickly that at the federal level we couldn't get anything through'. While they nonetheless attempted some state-based strategies in coalition with other NGOs, these were mainly to test the waters and were left aside when it was clear that the federal government would not support them (interview, 7/3/2017).

Interestingly, while other groups also highlighted that the Belgian federal political route was blocked and that they decided to focus their resources elsewhere, they decided to target the regional and local levels rather than switch to market-based strategies, in part because they see market-based strategies as a shallow and ineffective solution (interview, 6/3/2017). This highlights that while the market may be an alternative sphere for groups to lobby if the state sphere is blocked, it remains only one of many possible opportunities – particularly in a multilevel polity – and that decisions may also depend on how groups evaluate the effectiveness and value of different actions, as well as the overall philosophy of the organisation.

Conclusion

The case study presented above has demonstrated the wide range of strategies that groups can use in both the state and market sphere, and indicated the role of GVCs in enabling and changing the balance of these strategies. Targeting of the market leader highlights the importance of market structure – which has been significantly rearranged by the emergence of GVCs – in groups' choices of strategies. A couple of interesting points have arisen from this first case study which warrant further attention in future research.

First is the finding that at least in this case, there was a clear pattern in the market-based strategies that Greenpeace used, moving from broader and less confrontational to much more targeted and public. While groups combine both inside and outside strategies in the state sphere, such a temporal aspect has not been found (Binderkrantz 2005; Binderkrantz & Krøyer 2012). Differences between the

way in which groups combine strategies and the evolution of these strategies warrants further attention, particularly because market strategies may provide an opportunity for groups to be more confrontational because of the different relationship between NGOs, companies and policymakers. When targeting campaigns at policymakers, groups may avoid confrontational strategies for fear of losing access or credibility afterwards, but this factor may not play into campaigns targeted towards the market where groups may not have to deal with the company again. Of course, Greenpeace uses confrontational strategies in both the state and market sphere, so this requires exploration through other case studies.

Second, market strategies in this case study emerged as a kind of 'fall-back' option, representing a kind of venue shopping whereby groups which have no access to the state – or when lobbying efforts have no impact on policymakers – can use the market as a venue for their campaign. This ties in with the idea that private regulation is a second-best option for groups in the transnational sphere (Vogel 2005; Vogel 2009), but has not been examined at the national level. Nonetheless, not all groups choose to take the market strategy, and future research could look at the factors *why* some groups choose to take the market sphere and others not.

The emergence of GVCs has had not only economic, but also political impacts. However, their political effects have been overlooked, particularly the way that they can impact lobbying patterns at a national level. The fragmentation of production into globalised, vertical chains has shifted the balance of power to the market sphere and has impacted groups' choice of where to hold their campaigns. Lead firms and retailers seem most vulnerable because of their key points in these chains. Further research should focus on drawing stronger causal links between GVCs and these outcomes in a variety of case studies.

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